

RESOLUTION NO. -2017
Condemning rhetoric, bigotry, threats and hate crimes in Westchester County

Whereas, anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish rhetoric, bigotry, threats and hate crimes have recently increased targeting Muslim and Jewish places of worship, community centers, families and children across the United States;

Whereas, bias and bigotry have also impacted many other ethnic groups nationally and in Westchester;

Whereas, such activity is detrimental to all people who cherish freedom and liberty;

Whereas, the many different ethnic groups of Westchester are part of the bedrock of our society and enrich our culture and make critical and patriotic contributions to our country and region;

Whereas, the many different ethnic groups of Westchester give back every day as military personnel, police officers, members of national security organizations, surgeons, nurses, caregivers, lawyers, bankers, teachers, students, and in many other roles;

Whereas, hateful and intolerant acts against Muslims, Jews, or any other ethnic groups are contrary to our country's founding principles and Westchester County's values of acceptance, welcoming, and fellowship with those of all faiths, beliefs, and cultures:

Whereas, Muslims who wear hijabs, headscarves, or other religious articles of clothing, and Jews, and other minorities, who wear yarmulkes, turbans or other articles of clothing dear to their faith, should feel safe in expressing themselves peacefully and in accordance with their traditions and be protected from bias and hateful language and actions;

Whereas, throughout history, the U.S. has welcomed wave after wave of immigrants and refugees who add enormous value to the economic and cultural life of our nation;

Whereas, Westchester County strives toward a more inclusive society and welcomes cultural, ethnic and religious diversity;

Whereas, all of the County's residents deserve to live in a safe environment free of hate and discrimination;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Westchester County Board of Legislators

1) Steadfastly confirms its dedication to the rights and dignity of all its Muslim, Jewish, and all other residents, including those of all other ethnic groups, faiths, beliefs, and cultures;

- 2) Denounces in the strongest terms, all hateful comments, intimidation, violence, vandalism, and other hate crimes targeted against Muslims, Jews, and all other ethnic groups, and against Mosques, Synagogues, Churches and other houses of worship and all religious schools, community centers, and all other places of gathering;
- 3) Recognizes that all the ethnic groups of Westchester County have made countless positive and patriotic contributions to our regional and national society;
- 4) Declares that the civil rights and civil liberties of all Westchester residents should be protected and preserved and reaffirms the inalienable right of every citizen to live without fear and intimidation, and to practice their freedom of faith;
- 5) Urges county and local law enforcement to work to prevent hate crimes, to encourage reporting of incidents of hateful acts and to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law those who engage in hate crimes;
- 6) Calls on the Westchester Human Rights Commission to work diligently to fulfill its mission to fight against "prejudice, intolerance, bigotry and discrimination" and to "prohibit acts of discrimination, including discrimination in employment, discrimination in public accommodations, discrimination in housing accommodation, discrimination in commercial space and land transactions, and discrimination in the issuing of credit."
- 7) Remains committed to fighting discrimination against all ethnic, religious, cultural and national origin groups, as specified in the protected classes set forth in the Human Rights Law Sections 700.01 and 700.02, and remain committed to fighting all forms of discrimination and human rights abuses as we learn about them.

May 15, 2017
White Plains, NY

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Gaylene Smith

Jane Marcus

U.S.P.F.

Committee on Legislation
Alfred Wilkin